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"Weisst du was du sah'st?"

PARSIFAL, Act i.

The Meister.

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No. 4.

"PARSIFAL."—PART III.

"Auch deine Thräne ward zum Segensthause,
du weinest—sieh! es lacht die Aue."



INDISCH erstaunt in den einsamen garten er blickt;—
as Parsifal stands upon the ramparts of Klingsor's
magic castle, looking down upon the wealth of tropical
luxuriance below, it is nothing but childish wonder that
he feels. Even after his momentary glimpse of the
mysteries of the temple-rites, his consciousness is not yet
awakened to the cost to others of his own selfish pursuit of
pleasure; and when the enchanted flowers surround him and
heap on him reproaches for the slaughter of their chosen cavaliers,
it is in all *naïveté* that he replies, "Must I not slay them, since
they hindered my path unto you?" To force his way to the

illusory delights of the senses, he must needs crush down his fellow-men, in heedless impulse. And here we must note the true instinct of the dramatist, who has not portrayed the hero of this story as a saint who cannot feel the temptations of ordinary men, but has shown the development of the soul from childish blamelessness, through ignorant dalliance with the world, to that perfect knowledge which can only be attained by the union of intuition with experience, through the bond of suffering. He has stood as a silent witness in the temple of the Gral, and watched its mysteries as though they were a dream; now he must stand in the world of unreal show and look upon its pomp as though *that* were reality, until he has learned its lesson.

A glimmering of the truth is breaking upon him as he asks the question, "Are ye, then, really flowers?" With all the childish innocence of their bearing (a point upon which Wagner laid special stress), he begins to feel that, amid the brilliant petals of the *Zaubermaedchen*, there lies a poisoned drop, though as yet the thought has not taken reasoned form. At last, however, he can no longer tolerate the heavy scent of this atmosphere of luxury, and cries to the maidens, "Begone! ye trap me not!" His first victory over self is thus won; yet these were but the skirmishers whom Klingsor had despatched in advance to molest his foe, and weary him before the conflict with Kundry should commence. For it is always after a host of minor dangers have been faced that, wearied with fatigue, perchance thrown off his guard in the flush of triumph, a man is suddenly exposed to the crucial trial of his life.

The voice of Kundry now sounds from amid the thicket of flowers, bidding Parsifal to stay. She commands the *Zaubermaedchen* to leave him; and, as the veil of creepers is lifted up and she is revealed in all the beauty lent her by the power of Klingsor's satanic magic, with a gesture of her hand she sweeps away the petty pleasures of the senses, in order that the great battle of the deepest emotions of the soul may have free field. The enchanted flowers steal away, but as they go they cast at

Parsifal the Parthian darts of ridicule, the ridicule hurled by the small things of this world at those who refuse to be their slaves, the ridicule which found its crowning-point in the mad laughter of their mistress, Kundry, in presence of the suffering Christ. It is fitting that thus the temptress should be heralded. Embowered in the rank wealth of intoxicating flowers, she is indeed the *Höllen-Rose*, the Rose of Hell, that mystic, sensuous antitype of the Rose of Heaven, the Gral, worshipped by the Rosicrucians under the form of the rosy-cross, and by the Roman Church as the Virgin Mary; she is also the *Teufel's Braut*, the Devil's Bride, as opposed to the *Sposa Dei*, the Bride of God.

With Kundry's advent, Parsifal becomes at once fully conscious of the hollowness of the joys which had been offered him, and which, in uneasy distrustfulness, he had renounced. As the *Zauberädchen* move away, he says, "All this, then, have I only dreamed?" His first contact with the burning source of passion has melted, like wax, the gaudy picture which had held him a moment enthralled. The world of illusion is not, however, destroyed as yet; it has only shifted its lights and shades, the better to deceive him. The butterfly pursuits of youth are to be replaced by the engrossing seductions of manhood.

Kundry begins her attack with consummate art, calling to Parsifal's mind the picture of maternal love, and thus concealing under the veil of sympathy the deadly weapons she has sharpened for the fray. Her narration of Herzeleide's death is far different from the brutal announcement of the same fact which she had made to him in the first act, and Parsifal, under the spell which Klingsor casts over all those who enter within his domains, does not recognize in the beautiful woman lying before him the wild witch who had aroused his hasty wrath in their first encounter in the forest of the Gral; attracted by the tender commiseration of her tones he sinks down at her feet, overcome with grief. Thus Kundry has prepared her victim for submission to her wiles. Embodying, as she does, the animal passions, she has chosen the purest form of love, the love of mother and child,

wherewith to open the door to a grosser passion; even the name by which no one but his mother had as yet called him, she drags into her service; and, for the first time in the drama, the name of "Parsifal" is employed. We never hear it except in this sense, and only here when Kundry is recalling the innocent hours of his childhood. Thus is the snare of lust concealed under the fair-seeming blossoms of compassion.

While Parsifal is reproaching himself with his neglect of Herzeleide, in the words, "My mother, how could I ever forget thee?" we hear from the orchestra the *motiv* of the Spear, and at the same moment the youth cries, "Ha! How have I forgotten all besides? Nought but blind folly lives in me." It is a momentary flash of consciousness of the mission on which he has been unwittingly sent. Kundry, however, cannot permit him to wake thus from the dream which she has been weaving around him, and, with treacherous words of comfort, she endeavours to draw back his thoughts to herself. She offers him the material fruits of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, and promises him that his folly shall turn to wisdom if he will yield to her love. Then, while Parsifal is still crouching half unconscious under the paralysing stroke of sorrow, she bends over him in one long kiss,—the kiss of Judas. For a moment victory seems to have crowned her traitorous attempt; but the victory is only apparent. The trance in which he has been sunk passes suddenly away, as Parsifal hears, in the magnetic circle which Kundry has now completed, the cry of Amfortas. His contact with the source of Amfortas' suffering has roused to full power his intuitive faculties, and placed him at once *en rapport* with the sufferer. With one loud cry, "Amfortas!" he starts up, and, casting aside the heedless folly of his youth, becomes a man! The kiss of Kundry has, indeed, as she promised, turned his folly into knowledge, but in a manner which she had not foretold. Instead of opening up to him the delights of material pleasure, it has revealed the deadly danger lurking in the poisoned cup.

This is the grand crisis of the drama. Henceforth Parsifal

is no more the thoughtless fool, but, with one bound, he has become the conscious redeemer of his race. Upon himself he has taken the sins of Amfortas, as the higher principle in man,—the true *Ego*, the *daimon* of Plato and Socrates, the *higher self* of the Eastern philosophers,—must take upon itself the experiences of its earthly vehicle. First it is the bodily wound of which Parsifal becomes conscious and feels it in his own body; then the terrible fire of *desire* ("sehnен") which devours Amfortas' heart in the pangs of lust; and at last the agony of the spirit which cries to be delivered from the shame of such contamination, "Save and redeem me from sin-stained hands!" The progress of Parsifal's enlightenment, from the physical, through the emotional, to the spiritual plane, is marvellously depicted, till finally he takes upon himself the whole of this great sin, and falls upon his knees in prayer for guidance.

Kundry approaches him and seeks once more to lead him captive, but the contact with the temptress only intensifies the acuteness of his vision, and the whole picture of Amfortas' fall is brought before him, as with the words, "That cursed kiss!" he rises to his feet and casts her from him. Temptation has now no danger for him, for from this time forth he has laid aside all thought of self in the compassion which has given him the knowledge promised in the words, "Durch mitleid wissend." Kundry perceiving this, endeavours now to arouse him to love for her by directing this feeling of compassion to herself. Wrapped in the egoism which is the very atmosphere of Klingsor's castle, she is now opposed to him as the principle of individuality to that of universality, and her whole instinct is therefore to bring his sympathy down from the lofty height of impersonal love for all men to the level of personal love for *one*. She tells him the terrible story of her curse, how she had laughed at Christ, and how she had been forced from "world to world," from life to life, in fruitless search of the Redeemer. It is the tale of material science, which laughs at every idea of Spirit and of a higher world, and yet, in spite of itself, is ever urged to seek for some eternal

dogma which it may enthrone in place of the belief which it has cast aside. Denying a soul to man, it sets up what Carlyle calls "a substitute for salt," and, as Kundry finds in each hoped-for redeemer but a "sinner that sinks in her arms" amid her scornful laughter, so it discards its hypotheses one by one, as each proves powerless to satisfy its cravings for eternal truth.

The purpose of her pleading is not long in revealing itself, for she ends this wonderful recital with an appeal to the newly-found redeemer, whom she so little understands, to *save* her by submitting to her embraces. Parsifal, however, in all the fervour of conviction of his mission, bids her for ever to forego the madness of seeking the assuagement of desire in the fulfilling of the appetites of the flesh: "Even for thy salvation am I sent, if thou wilt throw desire aside. Love and redemption shall reward thee, if thou wilt lead me to Amfortas." But Kundry cannot fathom the depths of this self-sacrifice; "compassion for me!" is her one appeal; she will not brook a thought for the sufferings of other fallen ones; and, as Parsifal finally casts her from him, his whole soul roused to loathing of this short-sighted selfishness, she calls to her aid her master, Klingsor. For, like Helen of Troy, who, so says tradition, living through centuries, was bound in service to Simon Magus, Kundry is but a tool in the hands of the sorcerer, Klingsor. The magician hurls the stolen spear at Parsifal; but against the power of purity Klingsor's might is unavailing. The spear hovers in the air above the head of Parsifal. He seizes the lance, and with it the whole force of Will, so long perverted from its rightful use, and consecrating it once more by the mystic sign of the Cross, he reduces to ruins the whole structure of deceit and evil built up by Klingsor. The castle falls in ruins to the ground, the magic-maidens,—sprung like the charmed plants called into instantaneous growth by the fakirs of India,—drop to the earth as faded flowers, and Kundry sinks down powerless. The world of illusion has been conquered and destroyed.

It is impossible to leave consideration of this extraordinary

conflict between Parsifal and Kundry without noticing its immense dramatic effect. The materials are entirely taken from the inner life of the soul, and the outward action is but slight; yet Wagner has condensed into this single scene a whole world-tragedy. We feel, when witnessing it, that it is not a mere question of the triumph of Kundry or of Parsifal, but of the wide-reaching victory of the powers of good or evil. In his music, Wagner has never reached such a pitch of intensity as in this dialogue, and it alone would be a full justification,—were such needed,—of his method of creating concrete symbols from short musical phrases, and employing the orchestra as a running commentary upon the text. The *motivs* of the *Gral*, of the *Spear*, of *Klingsor*, of *Sorcery*, of *Amfortas*, &c., &c., are constantly emerging from the sea of harmony, and pointing out the inner connection of the story. It is in this way that the meaning of Kundry's kiss is clearly shown, through its accompaniment by the *motiv* of *Sorcery*, indicating the deception of the senses; thus that the first *motiv* of *Herzeleide*, as Parsifal's mother is, as soon as the youth becomes the compassionate man, replaced by a second *Herzeleide-motiv*, which finds henceforth more general application, the *heart's affliction* passing now from the personal sorrow of the individual to the universal sorrow of mankind, and is in this sense developed later as an accompaniment to Amfortas' cry to "Death!"; and thus that Kundry, longing for the love of Parsifal, employs the same yearning *motiv* that is employed by her lowlier sisters the *Zaubermaedchen*, showing her relationship with them, and preparing us for their fellowship in her redemption when in the last act her sobs of penitence are accompanied by the same theme.

We must now pass on to a brief notice of the third act; brief, partly on account of exigencies of space, and partly because the gentle peace of the greater portion of the act can scarcely be expressed in words.

The orchestral introduction depicts the wanderings of Parsifal through the world, in search of the path to the *Gral*. He had

stood once in its temple, and knew not what he saw ; its meaning could not be told to him by Gurnemanz, for no man can learn the truth at second-hand, and placed in presence of the great mysteries of life, each one must read the riddle for himself. Because he could not solve it then, he was thrust forth to search among the bitter fruits of experience for the seed of life and wisdom. Through his conflict with Kundry he learned victory over self and compassion for others ; but long years of probation were still needed ere the contamination of even involuntary contact with sin could be washed out, and ere the character of the man could be confirmed in strength of purpose by the daily trials of earthly life. The spear, won back from the powers of darkness,—the Will wrested from the dominion of evil,—he must learn to carry undesecrated through the world ; “to keep intact the holy spear, from every weapon wounds I won.” This is no picture of the recluse who seeks to win his own salvation by burying himself in the desert far from men, but of the messenger of truth who is sent to bear his message over the whole face of the earth, and to withstand, unaided, every attack of the enemy. This whole episode is summed up in the musical prelude of the act, the same strains being employed which are heard later during Parsifal’s recital of his journeyings.

The act commences with the finding by Gurnemanz of the body of Kundry, and his waking her once more to life. It is the dawn of a new era for mankind, and Matter must be called forth from its death-sleep to minister to Spirit. The only words that Kundry utters in this act are “Dienen—dienen” (service). Her powers of temptation have been destroyed by Parsifal, and henceforth she is to take her proper *rôle* of submission to the higher dictates of the soul.

The knights have, during the long interval since the first act of the drama, pursued the course too often adopted by misguided votaries of religion. Without a leader,—for Amfortas, bereft of the power of the spear, has refused to enter upon any course of action,—they have betaken themselves to the solitary life of the

ascetic, each one seeking *for himself* the scanty herbs and roots wherewith to maintain his joyless life. No more are they sent forth into the world on mercy's errands, and, deprived of the sustenance of the Gral, their power is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of death. Titurel, the ancient ruler, their former spirituality, has died, and nought but penance is their aim. This is the tale that Gurnemanz tells Parsifal, when at last the promised redeemer once more appears in the Gral's domain : " Ah ! sorely do we need the salvation which thou bringest ! "

The days of mourning are now drawing to a close ; the last trial has been passed by Parsifal, and when he swoons beside the holy well it is but to awake to a new creation, to Nature smiling on her new-found king, as the black armour of his days of suffering is laid aside. His first question on recovering consciousness contains the whole history of his weary quest, " Shall I to-day be led unto Amfortas ? " Not one thought of self remains. Kundry, like Mary Magdalene, now washes his feet and dries them with her hair, while Gurnemanz pours the holy water on his head, and in this and the anointment we have the picture of the completed union of body, mind and spirit (represented in Kundry, Gurnemanz and Parsifal) by the purifying water and the consecrating oil. All Nature joins in the new-won peace of the holy day, and every creature that " breathes and lives and once more lives,"*—looks up in homage to redeemed mankind." The heavy, sensual blooms of the tropical vegetation are replaced by the innocent meadow-flowers of spring ; Parsifal looks around on the flowering meadows, and says, " With what loving sympathy they speak to me ! " ; and thus at last he has learned the great lesson of his oneness with the whole of creation, the *tat tvam asi* (" Thou art this," i.e., thou and the universe are one) of the Vedas, so often referred to both by Schopenhauer and Wagner. The doctrine of the

* "Was athmet, lebt und wieder lebt,"—surely an intentional hint at the Eastern doctrine of reincarnation, of which we find so many traces in this drama, as in the constant passage of Kundry from one state of existence to another, and the references to her previous life "aus früher'm leben," &c.

evolution of each kingdom of created beings is also referred to here ; for, as man has stepped forward, so now do the lower races follow on the rising scale, " looking up to him."

Parsifal has overcome the world, the flesh and the devil,—the trials of his long journeyings, Kundry, and Klingsor,—and has completed the act of Renunciation, the final aim of the teachings of both Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha, with the one object of saving others ; Gurnemanz, the intellect, has recognized in Spirit his rightful master ; and Kundry, the animal soul or bodily instincts, has lost her mad laughter in the softening tears of contrition and submitted herself to the dictates of Parsifal, her higher self, as he repays her former kiss of passion by his kiss of pardoning love. Nought now remains but the final promulgation of this new-found peace in the temple of the Gral.

Here we shall find Amfortas in deadliest need. The last spark of life has, with the death of Titurel, died out from the embers of a smouldering religion ; the Church, handed over by Amfortas's fall to the power of the world, is hastening forward to complete disruption. The tables of the love-feast are not set out, and the knights appear now in the steel helmet of war. The king refuses to unveil the Gral, to approach the mysteries which his guilty conscience dreads, and the knights, instead of words of brotherly counsel, are urging upon him the fulfilment of his duty in threatening tones. Amfortas, feeling the cold hand of death already upon him, refuses to be once more forced back into the world of suffering life. A religious crisis has arrived ; a calamity is impending which only one can avert. It is now that from out the ashes of the old world a new world must arise.

Parsifal now enters clad in the mantle of the knights, but robed in pure white ; for the azure hue of faith is now replaced by the clear light of fruition, and the robe of peace is mantled by the cloak of love. Bearing aloft the holy spear and followed by Gurnemanz and Kundry, he marches forward into this tumultuous scene. His appearance presents the greatest contrast to that of

the hitherto king, Amfortas ; the dark hair and full beard, and the agitated gestures of the man of passion and desire, opposed by the fair locks and delicate beard, and the serene, majestic movements of the man of spiritual peace. The rule of the "Black Christ" is over, and the White Christ passes on to his kingdom. With one touch of the spear, the sinning ruler, Amfortas, is healed ; the Will, which had succumbed to bodily temptation, now, purified and cleansed by suffering and wielded by the power of Spirit which brings it into harmony with the Universal Will, heals all dissensions of mankind. The brotherhood, re-united by the force of sympathy (*mitleid*), hail the recovery of their long-lost spiritual power, and greet in Parsifal their longed-for, promised Messiah. Kundry, as woman at last admitted to the highest equality with man, approaches the altar upon her knees, and falls upon its steps, her soul released from centuries of bondage in the trammels of her down-trod bodily form ; a spiritual union with Parsifal has replaced the bodily union which she so madly sought in the magic garden, and, with the completion of this higher union, the distinction of sex must needs pass away and her body fall to dust while her soul is united with that of her redeemer. Thus has Matter, brought to rest, passed away from the illusory form,—the *Maya* of the Vedas, of which Kundry in her protean external appearance was the type,—into the divine essence of Spirit.

The spear, glowing with the rosy light that proclaims its kinship, is laid once more beside its counterpart the Gral, and Will is for ever harmonized with Wisdom. Parsifal proclaims that no more henceforth shall Wisdom be concealed from the sight of man ; side by side shall the holy treasures lie unveiled. To crown the restoration of the dominion of peace and of the eternal harmony of Spirit and Matter, the divine dove descends in a flood of radiance and, resting above the holy symbols, completes the trinity of Wisdom, Will, and Love.

Thus ends the most remarkable drama of modern times, a drama whose unity of purpose, simplicity of construction, and

poetry of fiction, would alone rank it among the masterpieces of artistic creation, and which, wedded to music whose beauty, especially in the last two acts, has never been surpassed, must ever remain a living monument to the genius of the man who, like Parsifal, preserved his faith in the ideal through years of battling with the world, until at last the fulfilled work of Bayreuth crowned his efforts with realization.

Our attempt has been to define the meaning of the poem in consonance with the spirit of the later prose-writings of Richard Wagner, but the few pages we have devoted to this purpose are far too limited wherein to detail all the poetry and philosophy of a work whose lofty thought and human expression place it by the side of the great religious tragedies of Athens, and whose sublime harmonies seem the very breath of the Eleusynian mysteries. Of its symbolism we have only selected one aspect, but, as in all works of inspiration, there are many aspects here; and whereas the final scene of the drama has been here regarded as the return of the golden age on earth, it may with equal consistency be viewed as the attainment of that state which the Christians call Heaven, or, with even more propriety, the *Nirvana* of the Buddhists,—that state in which the desires of individual egoism are stilled in the great peace of the Renunciation of Self, attained by Parsifal only after he had learned compassion by suffering. As in Parsifal himself the evolution of the individual soul is depicted, so in the history of the Holy Spear is pictured the great cycle of the universe, from its first Emanation from the Great Unknown (brought down by an angel host), through the depths of material degradation (in the power of Klingsor), to its re-absorption in the Infinite where Time and Space are not; from action to rest, from Manvantara to Pralaya. None who have witnessed *Parsifal* at Bayreuth but must have felt its moral influence, its echo from the days when Faith was yet a living factor in the world and its promise of a time when the Love of mankind united in the bonds of a Universal Brotherhood shall fulfil the last words of the drama:—"ERLÖSUNG DEM ERLÖSER."

**TWO STUDIES OF THE OVERTURE TO
"THE FLYING DUTCHMAN."**

I.

Weird wand'ring spirit doom'd to wait
A maiden's love thy soul to free,
Who linking unto thine her fate,
Would sacrifice herself for thee,
Here let thy weary vigil cease,—
Saved by pure Senta's plighted troth,
Her faithful love shall bring thee peace,
And pardon for thy impious oath !



ITH what boisterous and resistless energy this wonderful overture, redolent of the salt sea waves in all their freshness and fury, opens !

How it throbs and pulsates with the restless force of the mighty ocean, a fitting prelude to the dramatic story it embodies, one which must be so well known to all readers of "The Meister" as to need no recapitulation here.

The overture opens *Allegro con brio*, with a *tremolando* from the violins, the bare fifths vividly descriptive of the howling tempest. This has scarcely awakened the listener's attention; ere the weirdly supernatural Curse *motiv*, given out *marcato* by horns and bassoons, breaks through the waves of sound, sinking, after still further forcible reiteration and stormy interruptions, into subdued snatches of sound in the far distance as the tempest dies away.

After this tumultuous opening, what a contrast the next few bars afford ! A delicious *Andante*, fit to herald the Angel of Mercy and fill the soul with a new-born hope, as the peaceful strains of the *Senta motiv*, pure and beautiful as the maiden herself, bring rest to the enraptured ear.

Who that has heard this plaintive melody with its glowing

harmonies and constantly-changing key-colour, tossed hither and thither above the surging waves of sound, can ever forget it?

The calm is, however, soon broken by the warning notes of the Curse *motiv*, which resounds from the horns and is re-echoed by the bassoons, leading into a turbulent two-bar phrase, typical of the Dutchman himself, this in its turn being closely followed by a portion of the strain representative of his future deliverer. This latter, heard in soul-entrancing snatches ever and again above the raging tempest seeking to silence it, comes as a heavenly messenger to the ill-fated mariner, bringing a fore-taste of the haven where he would be.

The chorus sung by the jovial sailors who fall in with the Dutchman's ship is next heard, but only for a while; we are hastening on to the end, the *Curse*, *Dutchman*, and *Senta* *motivs* (the two former often worked simultaneously), follow one another in rapid succession, hurrying the listener along as upon a whirlwind, each of the themes apparently striving for the mastery.

But a calm comes at last. We hear the *motiv* typical of the Angel of Mercy rise triumphantly aloft. The whole orchestra glows and exults in full possession of the thrilling theme it has so long and passionately striven to grasp, and, as the glorified form of Senta, clasped in the arms of the man she has sacrificed herself to save, ascends on high, this masterly overture, one of the most perfect of tone-poems and grandest of sea-pictures, comes to an exciting close!

HENRY KNIGHT.

II.

OF what does this music remind me? Everything, and yet nothing actually definable. It is the dancing of leaf-shadows under a full moon on a still October night; it is the falling of snow-flakes on an isolated tomb in a far-off wilderness; it is a phantom of love flitting on illusive wings betwixt the cradle of hope and the grave of despair; it is an art that unites the sorrows and sentiments of ages with the experience and passions of our

lives, and breaks the sombre silence that entombs our secret thoughts and sufferings, putting into magic tones all the memories, vague or vivid, recent or remote, that dwell in our inner consciousness. It is the demonstration of a science that voices the hidden meanings of the soul in combinations of harmony which at times seem fragmentary,—at others, complete. This music is the union of thought and tone, poetry and philosophy. It is the only scientific element that is at once mystical and mathematic. Here we have symbolical rhythm as full of reason and revelation as the proverbs of Shakspeare or the polemics of Socrates, with an added power, inclination and charm not contained in the finest expressions of classical literature. The opening strains of "The Flying Dutchman" make the ceaseless heaving of the ocean speak with remorseless meaning. A resistless murmur slowly develops into tone pictures that strike the imagination like the groaning of giants lashed to the bosom of mighty billows. It is like an interlude from the depths of watery tombs, a wail from the "Divina Commedia," an anguish that moves the heart to pity and the mind to despair. Idealistic in its tenderness, realistic in its passion and pain, it sways the emotions as the storm wave sways the bark without sail or rudder. The most exact, vivid and complete musical epic of its kind ever given to the world, it has the fury of Homer, the compassion of Dante, the broad and powerful sweep of Beethoven. It is the orchestra alone that is acting ; and the supreme art of the master is centred in the one idea of depicting a silence that speaks first by signs, then by groans, then by maxims,—the silence that makes Macbeth and Faust so golden, so incomprehensible, and yet so plain. It seems like a paradox, a miracle ; but genius here, as elsewhere, conciliates all contradictions and repudiates everything impossible. But the orchestra, without the aid of singers or stage settings, presents us with a musical mirror in which we both see and hear the ceaseless rolling and muffled madness of the implacable waters. Vast tone waves roll together, disappear into infinitude, to be followed by others, which roll and rebound on the rocks of time with echoes from the rugged shores of starless night.

And now comes flitting by the phantom ship ! See it there, in the spectral light, shimmering like a vision in delirious sleep ! Frail and frightful, it glides in the gloaming like a serpent with transparent wings, doomed to ride the seas, sailing with the winds hither and thither, now halting in the calm of purple twilight, driven again to wander until the lurid light of another hopeless morning mocks the sight and stupifies the senses.

Away, away, out of dawn into darkness, the sound of the oboe and the kettledrum accompany this wandering soul into regions where suffering and memory are one, and nothing is real but the consciousness of eternal anguish.

JESSE SHEPARD.

Absolute Music is colour without drawing ; absolute Poetry is drawing without colour.—

No individual can be happy till we all are happy, for no individual can be free until all men are free.—

The more independent and free the being, the stronger is its Love. Compare the maternal love of a lioness with that of a cow, the marital love of a wolf with that of a sheep.—

Nothing is free but the work of art which fulfils in its manifestation the ideal of beauty and strength.—

No ideal is free until it has been carried out to completion and has passed over into life.

RICHARD WAGNER.

The Editors of "THE MEISTER" regret that want of space prevents their inserting in the present issue the continuation of Mr. C. Dowdeswell's article on Schopenhauer; it will be published in No. V., in which number will also appear the first instalment of a translation of Richard Wagner's "Art and Religion."



ART AND REVOLUTION.

Translated from Richard Wagner's "Die Kunst und die Revolution," 1849.

PART III.



THE Greek knew no handicraft. The preparation of the so-called necessities of life,—which, strictly speaking, makes up the whole business of our private and our public life,—seemed unworthy to the Greek to be the object of special and engrossing attention. His spirit lived only in publicity, in the community of his race; the necessities of his public life were all his care; but this public life was led by the patriot, the statesman, the artist, not by the journeyman. The Greek went forth to the delights of this public life from a home simple and unadorned. It would have seemed to him disgraceful and degrading to revel, within the costly walls of a private palace, in the refinements of luxury and extravagance which to-day are the one ideal of the life of a prince of the Stock Exchange; for in this lay the distinction between the Greeks and the selfish Easterns whom he called "Barbarians." His body he exercised in the public baths and gymnasia; his simple, noble clothing was for the most part the artistic care of the women; and whenever he fell upon the necessity of manual toil, it was of his very nature that he should find out its artistic side, and straightway elevate it to the rank of Art. But the drudgery of domestic work he thrust away from himself,—to *slaves*.

It is this *slave* that has become the perilous element in all the history of the world. The slave has, by reason of the apparent necessity of his slavery, exposed the hollowness and transitory nature of all the strength and beauty of the Grecian type of humanity, and has shown to all time that *beauty and strength, as characteristics of public life, can only prove lasting blessings when they are the common property of mankind.*

Unhappily things have not yet advanced beyond the mere demonstration. In fact, the evolution of man, that has lasted now two thousand years, has been but in the spirit of *reaction*. It has dragged down the fair, free man to slavery ; the slave has not become a freeman, but the freeman a slave.

To the Greeks, only the fair and strong man was free, and this man was *himself* ; whatever lay outside the circle of Grecian manhood was to him *barbarian*, and if he employed it,—it was as *slave*. True that the man who was not Greek was really barbarian and slave ; but he was still a *man*, and his barbarianism and his slavery were not parts of his nature, but were his fate, the sins of history against his nature, as it is to-day the sin of civilization that among the healthiest nations in the healthiest climates there exist the sickly and the crippled. This historical sin, however, was destined to be avenged upon the free Greeks themselves. Where there was no feeling of absolute love of humankind among the nations, the barbarian needed only to subjugate the Greek, and the Grecian freedom, strength and beauty perished from the earth. Thus, in deep humiliation, two hundred million men, huddled in helpless confusion in the Roman empire, too soon found out that when all men cannot be *free and happy*, all men alike must suffer *in slavery*.

Thus till this very day we are slaves, with but the consolation that each one of us shares the common fate of slavery. Slaves, to whom once the Christian apostles and the Emperor Constantine gave counsel in patience to submit to a suffering earthly life for sake of happiness in a world beyond ; slaves, whom bankers and manufacturers teach nowadays to seek the goal of being in toil for daily bread. In his time, the Emperor Constantine alone felt free from all this slavery when he enthroned himself as a self-seeking heathen despot above this life which he had shown to his believing subjects as one so useless. And free alone, to-day,—at least in the sense of freedom from open slavery,—feels he who is possessed of wealth ; because he is thus able to employ his life to some other end than that of the gain of the bare means of

subsistence. As the striving for freedom from universal slavery proclaimed itself in the Roman and Mediæval times as desire for absolute dominion, so it appears to-day as the greed for gold ; and we must not be surprised if even Art grasps after gold, for everything strives for its freedom, for its god ; and our god is gold, our religion the pursuit of wealth.

Yet Art remains in its essence what it ever was ; we must only say that it is not present in our modern social system. It lives, however, and has ever lived, in the conscience of individuals, as the one, fair, indivisible Art. The only difference is this : with the Greeks it lived in the public conscience, whereas to-day it lives only in the conscience of private persons, the public recking nothing of it. Therefore, in its flowering time the Grecian Art was *conservative*, because it was a satisfactory expression of the public conscience ; with us, true art is *revolutionary*, because its very existence is diametrically opposed to the ruling spirit of the times.

With the Greeks, the perfect work of art, the Drama, was the archetype of all that was most expressive in their nature. It was the nation itself, in intimate connection with its own history, that stood mirrored in its art-work, that communed with itself and, in the course of a few short hours, feasted on its own noblest essence. All division of the object of its enjoyment, all scattering of the forces gathered in operation on one point, all diversion of the elements into different channels, must needs have been as hurtful to this unique, noble art-work as to the State itself ; and thus it could only mature, but never change its nature. In this wise Art was conservative, as were the noblest of the sons of Greece who lived while it lived. Æschylus is the very type of this conservatism. His loftiest work of conservative art is the "Oresteia," with which he stands opposed, as poet to the more youthful Sophocles, as statesman to the revolutionary Pericles. The victory of Sophocles, as that of Pericles, was conformable to the spirit of the advancing development of mankind ; but the deposition of Æschylus was the first downward step from the

height of Grecian Tragedy, the beginning of the dissolution of the Athenian polity.

With the later downfall of Tragedy, Art became less and less the expression of the public conscience. The Drama separated into its component parts : rhetoric, sculpture, painting, music, &c., forsook the ranks in which they had moved in unison before, each one to take its own way, in lonely self-sufficiency to pursue its own development. And thus it was with the renaissance of Art which we find grafted upon these dissociated Arts that had sprung from the ruins of Grecian Tragedy. The great united Art-work of Greece could not reveal itself to our bewildered, wandering, piecemeal minds in all its fulness. How could we understand it ? But we knew how to appropriate those separate handiworks of Art ; for as goodly handiwork, to which class they had already fallen in the Romo-Greek world, they lay not so far from our own nature and our own minds. The guild and handicraft spirit of the new citizenship sprang to active life in the towns ; princes and notabilities were well pleased that their castles should be more becomingly built and decorated, their halls decked with more attractive paintings than had been possible to the raw art of the Middle Ages. The priests laid hands on rhetoric for their pulpits, and music for their church choirs ; and the new world of handicraft worked valiantly in the domains of the separate arts of Greece, so far at least as they seemed comprehensible and agreeable to its purpose.

Each one of these dissevered arts, nourished and luxuriously tended for the entertainment of the rich, has now filled the world full with its costly products. Great minds have in each brought forth marvels ; but the one true Art has not, either with or since the Renaissance, been reborn. The perfect work of art, the great, united expression of a free and lovely public spirit, the Drama, Tragedy,—however great the poets who have now and again indited tragedies,—is not yet born again, for reason that it cannot be reborn, but must be *born anew*.

Only the great Revolution of mankind, whose beginning

once shattered Grecian Tragedy, can win for us this Art-work. For only this Revolution can from its very depths bring to birth afresh, in the beauty of a noble universality, that which it once tore from the conservative spirit of a time of beautiful but narrow-reaching culture, and, tearing it, engulfed.

Only Revolution, not Restoration, can give us back that highest Art-work. The aim we have to set before us is immeasurably greater than that which was once accomplished in olden times. As the Grecian Art-work embraced the spirit of a fair and noble nation, so must the Art-work of the future embrace the spirit of a whole mankind freed from every fetter of nationality ; the peculiarities of national character must be no more than its embellishment, the individual charm of manifold diversity, and not a cramping barrier. We have thus quite other work before us than an attempt to resuscitate old Greece ; indeed, the imbecile restoration of a sham Greek mode of art has already been attempted,—for what will our artists not attempt, to order ? But nothing but a characterless patchwork has ever been the result : the offspring of the same juggling purpose which we see in the whole history of our official civilization, seized as it is with a desire ever to avoid the only lawful purpose,—the purpose of Nature.

No, we do not wish to revert to Greekdom ; for what the Greeks knew not, and, knowing not, came by their downfall, that know *we*. It is their very fall, whose cause we now perceive after long years of misery and universal suffering, that shows us clearly what we should become : it shows us that we must love all men before we can love ourselves, before we can regain joy in our own personality. From the dishonouring slave-yoke of universal journeymanship, with its sickly, mercenary soul, we wish to soar up to the free manhood of Art with the star-rays of its World-soul ; from the miserable, overburdened day-labourers of industrial commerce, we desire to become, each one of us, fair, strong men, to whom the world belongs as an eternal, inexhaustible source of the highest delight of Art.

To this end we need the omnipotent power of revolution ; for the power of revolution is our only means to reach the goal, whose attainment will alone justify the first exercise of that power in the disintegration of Greek Tragedy and in the dissolution of the Athenian State.

But whence shall we derive this power in our present state of utmost powerlessness ? Whence the manly strength against the crushing pressure of a civilization which disowns all manhood, against the arrogance of a culture which employs the human soul only as the steam-power of machinery ? Whence the light with which to illuminate the dominant, horrible heresy that asserts that this civilization and this culture are of more value in themselves than the true, living Man ; that Man has worth and value only as a blind tool of that despotic, abstract power, and not in himself by virtue of his manhood ?

When the learned physician is at the end of his resources, we turn at last in despair to—Nature. Nature, and only Nature, can bring to pass the unravelling of the tangled skein of the world's fate. As Culture, starting with the Christian belief in the worthlessness of human nature, disowns humanity, she has created for herself a foe whom she must necessarily annihilate, inasmuch as in herself there is no place for manhood ; this foe is the eternal and only living Nature. Nature, human Nature, will proclaim to the two sisters, Culture and Civilization, her law : “So far as I am contained in you, shall ye live and flourish ; so far as I am not in you, shall ye rot and die !”

In the inhuman progress of Culture we see, however, the happy result that the heavy load, with which she presses down Nature, grows so enormous that it gives at last to down-trodden undying Nature the necessary impetus which impels the latter to hurl far from her, with one thrust, the whole cramping burden ; and this heaping up of culture it is that teaches Nature her own gigantic power. The setting in motion of this force is—Revolution.

But in what way is it that, at the present social crisis, this

revolutionary force exhibits itself? Is it not in the pride of the mechanic in the moral consciousness of his labour, as opposed to the criminal passivity or immoral activity of the rich? Does he not wish, as in revenge, to elevate the principle of labour to the rank of the one and orthodox religion of the community? To force the rich like him to work,—like him, by the sweat of their brow, to gain their daily bread? Must we not fear that the exercise of this power, the recognition of this principle, would elevate at last the degrading dominion of journeymanship to an absolute and universal might, and,—to keep to our principal theme,—would straightway make Art an impossibility for all time?

In truth, this is the fear of many a candid friend of Art and of many an upright friend of humanity, whose only wish is to preserve the nobler core of our civilization. But they mistake the true nature of the great social movement. They are led astray by the professed theories of our socialistic doctrinaires, who would fain patch up an impossible compact with the present conditions of society. They are deceived by the immediate expression of the discontent of the most suffering portion of our community, whose source lies really in a deeper, nobler instinct of Nature; the instinct which demands a worthy enjoyment of life, whose material content shall no longer enslave man by the employment of all his life forces in its weary service, but in which he shall rejoice as Man. It is thus the impulse which forces man out from journeymanship to artistic manhood, to the free dignity of Man.

It is only Art which can give its noblest significance to this social impulse, in showing it its true direction. Only on the shoulders of this great social movement can true Art lift itself up from the present civilized barbarianism to its true post of honour; each has a common goal, and the two can only reach it when they recognize it as such. This goal is the strong, fair Man, to whom Revolution gives his strength, and Art his Beauty.

It is not our purpose to indicate in more minute detail the march of the social development which must be pursued by the history of the world ; nor could a scientific calculation foretell the historical course of events in the unfolding of the social nature of mankind, a course depending so little upon preconceived ideas. Nothing is created by historical rules, but everything evolves from its own inner necessity. But it is impossible that the situation at which this movement shall arrive as its goal should be other than one totally opposite to the present condition of mankind ; else were the whole history of the world a restless zigzag of cross purposes, and not the ordered movement of a mighty stream, which, with all its bends, its deviations and its floods, yet flows for ever in one steadfast course.

It is this future condition of mankind that we must now consider, when the race has freed itself from its last heresy, the denial of Nature,—that heresy which has taught man hitherto to look upon himself as a mere tool to an end which lay outside himself. When mankind knows at last that itself is the one and only object of its existence, and that only in the community of all men can this purpose be fully attained, then will its mutual creed be couched in an actual fulfilment of the injunction of Christ : “ Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink ; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on, for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.” This Heavenly Father will then be none other than the social wisdom of mankind, which gives the fulness of nature as an inheritance for the welfare of all men. The crime and the curse of our social intercourse have lain in this, that the mere physical maintenance of life has been till now the one object of our care,—a care that has, in truth, devoured our souls and bodies, and lamed almost every spiritual impulse. This *Care* has made man weak and slavish, dull and wretched, a creature that can neither love nor hate, a thrall of commerce, ever ready to give up the last vestige of his freedom of will, so only that this *Care* might be a little lightened.

When mankind, united in brotherhood, has cast this Care for ever from its shoulders and,—as the Greeks laid it on their slaves,—lain it on machines, the artificial slaves of free, creative man, slaves which till now himself has served as serves the Fetich-votary the idol his own hands have made, then will his enfranchised energy proclaim itself as nought but pure artistic impulse. Thus shall we regain in far higher measure the element of Grecian life; what was with the Greek the product of natural development will be with us the result of ages of endeavour; what was to him a half-unconscious gift will remain with us as the spoils of the battle for knowledge; for that which mankind, in its vast communion, doth truly know can never more be lost.

Only the strong know Love; Love alone can grasp the ideal of Beauty; only Beauty can give birth to Art. The love of weaklings can only express itself as the incitement to lust; the love of the weak for the strong is abasement and fear; the love of the strong for the weak is compassion and forbearance; but the love of the strong for the strong is Love, for it is the free surrender to one who cannot conquer us. Under every fold of heaven's canopy, in every race, shall men, by absolute freedom, grow up in equal strength, by strength to truest love, and by true love to beauty; but *Art is Beauty in action.*

Whatsoever may seem to us to be the goal of existence, to that we mould our lives and those of our children. The Goth was bred to battle and to chase, the earnest Christian to abstinence and humility, while the liegeman of the modern state is bred to industrial gain even in the domain of art and science. But when, for our freeman of the future, the winning of the means of maintenance of life is no more set up as the goal of life, but, by a new belief,—or better, *knowledge*,—set in action, the maintenance of life is assured to him in recompense for a natural and moderate expenditure of energy; in short, when Industry is no longer our mistress but our handmaid, then shall we set the goal of existence in joy in life, and strive to rear up our children to be fit and worthy partakers in this joy. This education,

starting from exercise of strength and nurture of bodily beauty, will soon become an artistic one, by reason of our undisturbed love to our children and our rejoicing in the ripening of their beauty, and each man will, in one domain or in another, become in truth an artist. The difference of natural inclination will build up arts in manifold variety and countless forms of each variety, in abundance hitherto undreamed ; and as the wisdom of all men will find at last its religious utterance in the one positive wisdom of free, united manhood, so will all these rich developments of Art find their intelligible bond of union in the Drama, the noble tragedy of man. The tragedy will be the festival of mankind ; in it, set free from all conventional etiquette, free, strong and beauteous man will celebrate the dole and the delight of all his love, and in lofty worth will consecrate his death's Love-Sacrifice.

This Art, again, will be in truth *conservative* ; yet, by reason of its own actual, inbred force, will it flourish and continue, and not cry out for maintenance for sake of other ends that lie outside itself ; for, mark ye well, *this Art seeks not for Gain*.

" Utopia ! Utopia !" I hear the cry of the great wiseacres and soothsayers of our modern Art-and-State-barbarism, the so-called practical men who, in the manipulation of their daily practice, can find no better means than lies and violence, or, if they be sincere and honourable, ignorance at best.

" Beautiful ideal ; but, alas ! like all ideals, one that can only soar above mankind condemned to imperfection, and never can be reached." Thus sighs the good-natured devotee of the kingdom of heaven, in which, at least for his own personality, God will recompense the inexplicable shortcomings of this earth and its human creatures.

They live and lie, they sin and suffer, in very truth in the most repugnant of conditions, in the filthy dregs of an indoctrinated and, therefore, never realized Utopia ; they toil and over-reach each other in every art of hypocrisy, so as to maintain the cheat of this Utopia, from which, as mangled cripples of the most commonplace and frivolous of passions, they fall headlong

down to the lamentable level of naked reality ; and yet they cry down the only natural redemption from their hallucinations as "Chimeras," as "Utopias," just as the poor sufferers in a mad-house take their insane imaginings for truth, and truth itself for insanity.

If history knows an actual Utopia, an ideal truly unattainable, it is that of Christendom ; for it has clearly shown, and shows it still from day to day, that its dogmas are *not* realizable. But could these dogmas become actually living and pass into real life, when they were directed against life itself and denied and cursed the principle of life ? Christianity is of purely spiritual, and super-spiritual content ; it preaches humility, renunciation, contempt of everything earthly, and, in this contempt,—brotherly love ! How is this fulfilled in the modern world, which yet calls itself a Christian world and holds fast to the Christian religion as its unassailable basis ? As the arrogance of hypocrisy, as usury, as robbery of Nature's possessions and egoistic scorn of suffering fellow-creatures. Whence is this shocking contradiction between the fulfilment and the ideal ? Even hence, that the ideal was feeble, sprang from the momentary relaxation and weakness of human nature, and sinned against the true, robust nature of man. Yet how strong this nature is, how unquenchable its ever fresh, productive fulness, it has shown more clearly under the universal incubus of that ideal, which, if its logical consequences had been fulfilled, would have completely swept the human race from off the earth, since even the abnegation of procreative love was preached by it as the height of virtue. But still ye see that, in spite of that all-powerful Church, the human race is so abundant that your Christian-economic State-wisdom knows not what to do with this abundance, and ye are looking round for means of social murder for its uprootal ; yea, and would in truth rejoice were mankind slain by Christianity, so that the solitary, abstract god of your own beloved *I* might gain sufficient space upon this earth !

These are the men who cry "Utopia," when the healthy

reason of mankind appeals from their insane experiments to the actuality of visible and tangible Nature, when it demands no more from the divine wisdom of man than that it should make good to us the instinct of the beasts, or give us at least the means of finding for ourselves the sustenance of our life, freed from anxiety though not from labour! And, truly, we ask from it no higher result for the community of mankind, in order that we may build upon this foundation the noblest, fairest temple of the true Art of the future.

The true artist, who has already taken up the right standpoint, may even now, as this standpoint is ever really present, labour for the Art-work of the future. Each of the sister Arts has, in truth, for ever, and therefore now also, proclaimed its conscience of its own high purpose in manifold creations. Wherefore then have the inspired creators of those noble works suffered from all time, and above all in the present? Was it not from their contact with the outer world, with the world for whom their works were destined? What has enraged the architect when he must shatter his creative force on orders for barracks and lodging-houses? What has crippled the painter when he must portray the repugnant visage of a millionaire? What the musician, when he must compose banquet-music? And what the poet, when he must write romances for the lending-library? What has been the sting of suffering to each? That he must squander his powers of creation for gain, and make his art a handicraft! Finally, what suffering must the dramatist bear who would unite each art in the highest product of Art, the drama? The suffering of all other artists combined in one!

What he creates becomes a work of Art only when it enters into open life, and a work of dramatic Art enters into life by means of the stage. But what are our theatrical institutions of to-day, with their disposal of the means of every branch of art? Industrial undertakings, even when they enjoy a special subsidy from Prince or State. Their direction is for the most part handed over to the same men who have conducted yesterday a speculation in grain, and to-morrow devote their well-trained knowledge

to a corner in sugar, or, perhaps, have educated their taste for theatrical proprieties in the mysteries of back-stairs intrigue or such-like functions. So long as,—in accordance with the prevailing character of public life and the necessity it lays upon the theatrical director to deal with the public in the manner of a clever commercial speculator,—we look upon the theatre as a mere means for the circulation of money and the production of interest for capital, it is only logical that we should hand over its direction (*i.e.*, its exploitation) to those who are well skilled in such transactions; for a really artistic direction, one which should fulfil the original purpose of the theatre, would, at all events, be in a very sorry condition for carrying out the modern aim. For this reason it must be clear to all who have the slightest insight that if the theatre is at all to answer to its natural, lofty mission, it must be completely freed from the necessity of industrial speculation.

How were this possible? Shall this solitary institution be released from a service to which to-day all men and every associated enterprise of men are yoked? Yea, it is the theatre that should take precedence of every other institution in this emancipation; for the theatre is the most wide-reaching art-institute and the richest in influence; and, till man can exercise in freedom his noblest energies, those of Art, how shall he hope to be free and self-sufficient in lower walks of life? When already the service of the State and military service are at least no longer industrial pursuits, let us begin with the enfranchisement of public art, since, as I have above explained, it is to *it* that we must assign an unspeakably lofty mission and an immeasurably weighty influence on our present social upheaval. Higher and better than a decrepit religion to which the spirit of the times gives the lie direct, more effectual and impressive than an incapable statesmanship which has long since lost its compass, an eternally youthful art, ever renewing its freshness from its own well-springs and the noblest spirit of the times, shall give to the passionate stream of social commotion, dashing now against

rugged precipices now lost in shallow swamps, a fair and lofty goal, the goal of noble manhood.

If ye, friends of Art, are truly zealous to learn how to protect it from the threatening storms, know ye that it is not merely a question of its maintenance, but one of permitting it first to attain its own true, full and individual life.

Is it your real object, ye statesmen of the tongue, in dealing with the threatened overthrow of Society, against which, perchance, ye strive,—because, in your shattered faith in the sincerity of human nature, ye cannot understand how this overthrow can escape the peril of making a bad condition infinitely worse,—is it, I say, your object to graft upon this evolution a strong and living pledge of future nobler customs? Then lend us all your help and all your strength, to give back Art unto itself and to its lofty mission.

Ye suffering brethren in every grade of human society, who in hot displeasure brood over the means to escape from this slavedom to money, and to become free men, fathom ye our purpose and help us to lift up Art to its due throne, so that we may show you how much therewith ye raise mechanical toil to Art and the serf of industry to the fair, self-knowing man who cries, with smiles begotten of intelligence, to sun and stars, to death and to eternity, "Ye, too, are mine, and I your lord."

Ye to whom I call, were ye at one with us in heart and mind, how easy were it to your Will to set the simple rules to work whose following must ensure the absolute prosperity of the mightiest of all art-institutions,—the Theatre! The business of the State and of the community would be, first of all, to provide the means to the end that the Theatre might be placed in a position to obey alone its higher and *true* calling. This end will be attained when the Theatre is so far supported that its direction need only be a purely artistic one; and no one can be better situated to carry this out than the general body of the artists themselves, who unite for the purpose of the art-work, and assure their own reciprocal success by means of appropriate interaction. The most complete freedom can only bind them

together in the endeavour to fulfil the object for whose sake they are emancipated from the fetters of commercial speculation ; and this object is Art, which the free man alone can grasp, and not the slave of wages.

The judge of their performance will be a free public. Yet, in presence of this Art, to make this public fully free and independent, one step further must be taken on the road ; the public must have *unbought admission* to theatrical representations. So long as money is necessary to all the needs of life, so long as without pay there remains nought to man but air, and scarcely water, the measures to be taken can only provide that the actual stage-performances, to witness which the public assembles, shall not have the semblance of work paid by the piece,—a method of regarding them which confessedly leads to the most humiliating misconception of the character of art-productions,—but it must be the duty of the State, or rather of the community interested in the matter, to combine their means in order to recompense the artists for their performance as a whole and not in parts.

Where there are not sufficient means for this it were better, both for the immediate present and for the future, to allow a theatre which could only be maintained as a commercial undertaking to close its doors ; at least, so long as the want of it had not shown itself sufficiently powerful to induce the community to make the needful sacrifice for its supply.

When once Society has developed its manly beauty and nobility in the way which we shall not attain alone by the influence of our Art, but by union with the great and inevitably approaching social revolution for which we must hope and strive, then will theatrical performances be the first associate undertakings from which the idea of money and wage shall disappear for as under the above-named conditions our education will become more and more an artistic one, so shall we ourselves all become in so far artists that we shall unite together in voluntary service only for the purpose of artistic accomplishment, and not for any side issue, such as that of gain.

Art and its institutions, whose desired organization it has

been here only possible briefly to sketch, would thus be the herald and the standard of all future institutions of the community : the spirit which would unite an artistic association in its attainment of its true goal would be found again in every other social union which set before itself a definite and worthy aim ; for all our future social actions, if we attain the truth, should be, and can be, of purely artistic character, as is alone befitting the noble capabilities of man.

Thus would Jesus Christ have shown us that we are all alike both men and brothers ; while Apollo would have stamped this great band of brotherhood with the seal of strength and beauty, and would have led mankind from doubt of its own worth to the consciousness of its highest godlike might. Let us, then, erect the altar of the future, in life as in our living art, to the two most lofty teachers of mankind :—*Jesus, who suffered for men ; and Apollo, who lifted them to their place of joy and honour.*

(Conclusion.)

The July number of the *London Quarterly Review* contains an admirably written article on "Richard Wagner and the Musical Drama," in which a vivid parallel is drawn between the *Oedipus* of Sophocles and the *Parsifal* of the German master. The article is well worth reading from its sympathetic handling and lucid style, and the writer shows that she has found the secret of Wagner's music. The only fault we can find with the essay is its shortness ; but an evident omission on the part of the editor to submit " proofs " to the author must be responsible for the persistent mis-spelling of such proper names as Joukowsky, Munich, and Gurnemanz, the former of which appears as *Tourkowski*, and the two latter as *Münich* and *Gurnomans*. The imagination of the writer has also run riot in filling the scene of the magic garden with " murmuring brooks and lovely birds," and in ascribing the conducting of *Parsifal* to Richter.

The October Number of the *Nineteenth Century* came as a mild surprise to the world of music, for it contained a joke. The witticism was rather ponderous, but Mr. Rowbotham must take heart of grace, and if he perseveres in the line of criticism which he has drawn for himself in his article, "The Wagner Bubble," he may in time eclipse the declining efforts of *Punch*. It is not our intention to review this extraordinary essay, as it has been cut to pieces already in the *Musical World*, and has received its death-blow in an amusing " reply " in the current (November) issue of the *Nineteenth Century* by Dr. Villiers Stanford, who regrets that " a tiny particle of the soapsud of the bubble should have got into Mr. Rowbotham's eye and made it smart." Both attack and rejoinder are, however, deficient in that dignified tone which generally characterizes a magazine where flippancy is out of place. The cause of Wagner's works can scarcely be said to have been affected by either article.

NOTES.

THE year 1888 cannot fail to be remembered as one of great moment for the cause of the Wagner dramas in general and the Bayreuth *Festspielhaus* in particular. On no previous occasion has the success been so decisive ; and those who have sometimes doubted whether the popularity of the Bavarian performances could be maintained, must now feel relieved of a load of anxiety in the assurance that a critical period has been passed, and a long series of representations may be confidently looked forward to through future years. The performances of 1886 had left but a slender margin of profit, and it was questioned whether there might not even be a deficit this year, in view of the heavy expenses incurred in the production of the *Meistersinger*; for, in order that the expenditure should be covered, it was necessary that on each day £1,000 worth of seats should be taken,—no small matter in a theatre that accommodates barely 1,400 persons, producing a revenue of about £1,400, provided there be no free list. True, that there is now a guarantee fund provided by the subscriptions of the *Patronats-Verein*, but any large demand upon that source must have, in the long run, proved fatal to the enterprise. However, the brilliant success, not only artistic but financial, has swept away all doubts on this score, and Wagnerians may now look forward cheerfully to a future of prosperity for Bayreuth.

Were proof needed of this statement, it would be forthcoming in the violent attacks made in some of the German papers upon the Bayreuth management. While the fate of the theatre was trembling in the balance, it was the fashion to ignore the performances or to prophesy a speedy failure; in the same way as while the building was as yet an *unrealized idea* in the Meister's mind, its erection was laughed at as impossible. But now our good friends are clamouring for the nationalization of the institution, for its diversion from the hands that have crowned it with success, and for an almost total uprooting from its precincts of the works of the master-mind who planned it. The cuckoo-policy has, however, little

chance of victory; for, in the person of the present German Emperor, the Wagner-Bayreuth cause has a good friend at court. It certainly was the intention of Richard Wagner to found in the Bayreuth theatre an institution in which not only his own, but also other masterpieces of classical dramatic music, should be from time to time represented. But what modesty may have dictated to him is scarcely incumbent upon his adherents until the great work of his life,—the trilogy of the *Nibelungen-Ring*,—for which the theatre was constructed, has once more passed over its boards. Questions of expense have hitherto delayed this consummation, and may yet delay it for awhile; but meantime it is only right that the way should be prepared by representations of the works which, like the *Ring* itself, were composed specially for such surroundings as Bayreuth alone affords. We even fear that the very perfection of the theatre, with its sunken orchestra, its unadorned auditorium and its focussing of all attention upon the stage, would betray the thinness of other works. Where else but in Wagner's own music-dramas shall we find dramatic purpose of sufficient intensity to justify this exclusion of all outside influences; and whence should we nowadays draw an audience fired with such enthusiasm for works even so great as the *Fidelio* or *Don Juan* that they would make the pilgrimage? However, it is not worth while to fight the air; those who love Wagner's music are likely to hear it for many a year at Bayreuth.

To return to this year's representations : those of *Parsifal*, nine in number, were given to crowded houses (on the 1st of August the applications were 500 in excess of the accommodation), and the eight performances of the *Meistersinger* were, except on one or two occasions, when a trifling number of seats were vacant, equally well attended. With regard to the latter the fact is the more noteworthy, inasmuch as there had been considerable influence brought to bear by local jealousy in order to deter people from flocking to hear a work which other managers fancied they could render equally well; and, to our knowledge, many persons were advised to select *Parsifal*, "as they could

hear the *Meistersinger* anywhere." Among the non-German audience the number of English-speaking people was even greater than on former years (Messrs. Chappell, of London, alone having sold 998 tickets), the theatre at times presenting a sea of faces bearing the characteristic Anglo-Saxon stamp. Second to the English came the French, while in the next place ranked the Italians.

With regard to the vexed question of the propriety of introducing religious subjects on the stage, in *Parsifal*, it is a notable fact that clergymen and priests were present in greater numbers than before, and on one occasion the picturesque garb of a Sister of Mercy was a prominent feature among the visitors. The broader views now current on the true spirit of religion are thus showing welcome signs.

On the familiar subjects of the dramas themselves we propose to offer no comments, for *Parsifal* has already been dealt with in this journal, and we have already in our hands an article on the *Meistersinger*, which will appear in our next issue. We shall therefore pass on to the execution and the executants.

Of the general execution we cannot, except in one or two occasional details, speak in too high praise. *Parsifal* was given in a way that could be only looked for at Bayreuth. Scenery, stage management &c., as near perfection as possible. The little "but," that must force its way into a review, is called forth by a trifling carelessness that crept, on one or two occasions, into the lighting of the stage, and by the persistent over-slowness of the rendering of the *vorspiels* to the first and third acts; the Blumen-mädchen chorus also was slightly marred by the too harsh tones of one of the soloists, while on one day the chorus of knights in the first act fell into some confusion. But defects such as these are scarcely to be weighed against the general care and fidelity of the execution, and should in future be easily remedied. It is only the enormous disparity between the Bayreuth performances and those of other theatres that makes such little faults observable; for the general theatre-goer is accustomed to accept bushels of blemishes, whereas at

Bayreuth he rejects the smallest grain. The stage-grouping, the smoothness of execution, the living picture ever present on the stage, and, above all, the reverent mystery of the representation; where else but at Bayreuth and in *Parsifal* are these to be found?

As for the *Meistersinger*, no laudatory words are strong enough. Those who had the privilege of hearing the work at Munich, under the master's own guidance, in 1868, aver that its first appearance was even surpassed by the Bayreuth representation. Since 1868, the work has never been given without "cuts," and the shortsighted persons who elected to stay away from a drama "they knew so well," have missed a revelation. If Wagner's constantly expressed dissatisfaction at the mutilation of his works needed justification, that justification was given at Bayreuth. The *Meistersinger* was presented in its entirety, and we challenge any one to point out a passage that could be omitted without marring the symmetry of the whole; even the third act, with its two hours' duration, passed away without calling up a moment's reflection on its length. This, of course, was only possible by the magic of a representation that left nothing to be desired. In management and execution, even *Parsifal* was surpassed by its sister-drama, and nowhere have we heard choruses calling as they do for such delicacy of interpretation, rendered in so perfect a manner as those of the *Lehrbuben* and *Meister* in the first act, and of the *Zunft* and *Volk* in the last scene. This scene presented the most picturesque stage picture we have ever witnessed; the whole life of the sixteenth-century German people was in motion on the stage, and the final tableau, when Hans Sachs is crowned with the laurel wreath, and his majestic figure is shown supported on either side by Eva and Walther, while Pogner half kneels before him, amid the jubilation of the Nürnbergers, was worthy of a Hans Makart, in all its wealth of colour. The almost impossible scene of the "cudgelling," at the close of the second act, was another of these marvels of stage art, and for the first time the extraordinary multiplicity of sounds was redeemed from wild confu-

sion, to rank by the side of the master-pieces of Bach, the king of fugues.

The orchestral rendering of the *Mastersinger* can easily be guessed when we recall the fact that the bâton was in the hands of Hans Richter, who, to say nothing of his well-known talent, had enjoyed the inestimable advantage of taking part in the musical arrangements of 1868 under the guidance of the Meister himself. No less a man than Richter could have done full justice to the infinite polyphony of this marvellous score. It is amusing, in this connection, to unearth the criticisms quoted in Glaserapp's "*Richard Wagner's Leben und Wirken*" from a Leipzig musical paper of 1862, dealing with the overture to this work: "It is void of charm, barren and incomprehensible, for it has no fitting melodic or rhythmic symmetry of construction. Its invention is as bizarre as its working out is inorganic, confused and unmasterly. In the whole composition there is nothing in which either the laity or the musician could possibly find any pleasure." We are luckily not met by such criticisms nowadays, for Wagner has conquered; but the complete victory of the "*Mastersinger*" has never been effected till this year, when no voice of dissent from the manifold beauties of the score could possibly find a hearing among those who were fortunate enough to be present at Bayreuth.

As for the individual singers, to deal first with *Parsifal*, the title rôle has never found so complete a representative as in Ernest Van Dyck (of Antwerp). We had long felt that there was much more in the character than had ever been shown by the earlier singers, and Van Dyck has shown us what was lacking before. His youthful appearance, his sympathetic voice and especially his marvellous dramatic powers have given us at last a living Parsifal. We could not desire a more perfect rendering of the great scene between Kundry and Parsifal than that exhibited by Herr Van Dyck and Frau Materna; the latter artist, being roused to fresh efforts by her partner, brought out the extraordinary conflict of passions raging in Kundry's breast in a manner which even she had not hitherto attained.

One of the most artistic touches in her performance was shown when Parsifal promises her salvation if,—and here the artist followed each word of the hero by an expectant movement of her lips, as though in eagerness to catch the next,—she will show him the path to Amfortas; the storm of scorn with which she then greeted his demand, and in which the whole of the sinful nature of Kundry seemed to rebel, is quite indescribable. Fraülein Malten was also seen at her best this year, and is daily pressing forward in the front rank of dramatic singers. The new Kundry, Frau Sucher, exhibited great acting power, though a little too melodramatic; but her appearance in the second act was a perfect realization of the beauty of the enchantress, and we regret that but one opportunity was given to this artist of showing her skill in the character. Of the two interpreters of the rôle of Amfortas, we preferred Herr Scheidemantel, for his intonation of the music, though Herr Reichmann was the finer in his passionate outburst in the third act. Gurnemanz, since the death of Scaria, has yet to be found, for neither Herr Gillmeister nor Herr Wiegand is a completely satisfactory exponent of this important rôle. Of Herr Jaeger's solitary performance of Parsifal we can only say that it was wisely not repeated, though in the last act his bearing was fine; but his appearance is not fitted to the youthful hero, nor is his singing such as it was when he was one of the Meister's favourite pupils. Last, not least, the Klingsor of Herr Planck was a model performance, leaving nothing to be wished for.

In the *Mastersinger*, Herr H. Gudehus was the unique Walther. The untiring energy with which he sang an arduous rôle was remarkable, and showed (as also did Van Dyck's *Parsifal*) how little justice there is in the common reproach that Wagner's music ruins the voice. The part of Eva was "trebled" by Fraülein Malten and Bettaque and Frau Sucher. It is difficult to say which of these artists was the best interpreter of the rôle; Fraülein Malten sang the music delightfully, and was specially good in the well-known quintet; Fraülein Bettaque made

as piquant a representative of the daughter of Pogner as could possibly be imagined, having the advantage of the freshness of youth; while Frau Sucher, though her bearing was somewhat too majestic, gave a special charm to the scene of the bestowal of the prize by the beauty of her execution of the "trill" which Wagner uses so sparingly, and which therefore has so remarkable an effect on its rare appearance. Hans Sachs found two splendid representatives in Herr Reichmann and Herr Scheide-mantel, of whom the former artist was decidedly the grander in the breadth of his delineation of the lovable character of the Shoemaker-Poet, and especially fine in the noble declamatory speech with which the drama closes. Fraulein Staudigl was an incomparable Magdalena, giving, by the light humour of her by-play, an interest to a part which so often falls flat from clumsy acting. Beckmesser was played (except on one occasion when Herr Kürner took the role), by Herr F. Friedrichs, of Bremen, with a fund of comic power and inventiveness that we have never before seen associated with this character; his clearness of articulation and peculiarities of intonation left not one of the sallies of the conceited *Stadtschreiber* without its point, while the extraordinary flexibility of his fingers was employed with most humorous effect. The David of Herr Hofmüller was also a perfect piece of comic acting, and the songs in which he instructs Walther in the mysteries of the "Meisters'" craft were delivered with a variety of expression that marked them at once as some of the choicest portions of this wonderful composition, and made us regret their too customary curtailment in other theatres. The character of Pogner was taken by Herr Gillmeister and by Herr Wiegand, and rendered satisfactorily on the whole, though we confess to having heard the "Johannisfest" sung infinitely better at London concerts by Mr. Henschel, and would gladly have

heard that artist at Bayreuth this year. The small role of Kothner was well sung by Dr. Schneider, of Munich. Of the minor parts we can only say that the individuality shown in the acting and the phrasing of the *ensembles* combined to make *Die Meistersinger*, as given at Bayreuth, an absolutely model performance, and reflected the utmost credit upon all concerned.

While representations are given with such care for detail, such completeness of *mise-en-scène*, and such breadth of general grasp, we may confidently prophesy that the Bayreuth theatre will long fulfil the high purpose for which it was founded by Meister Richard Wagner.

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We are informed that the Stipendiary Fund for enabling poorer artists and art-lovers to journey to Bayreuth, and to witness the performances there, amounted to 9,000 marks, 174 persons benefiting by the fund. This fund carries out well the desire of Wagner, that the *Festspiel* should not be accessible alone to the rich, and Mr. Schön, of Worms, deserves the hearty thanks of all Wagnerians for his untiring exertions in collecting contributions for so laudable a purpose.

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Herr Van Dyck, who created so great an impression at Bayreuth, as *Parsifal*, has been engaged for the Vienna Opera-house, where his impersonation of Lohengrin achieved an artistic triumph.

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We understand that there will probably be no performances at Bayreuth in 1889. Much as we may regret the announcement, it is only fair that the artists should have an opportunity of enjoying their summer holiday next year, for many of them are forced to sacrifice their vacation to the cause of Wagner's Art-work at Bayreuth. No definite decision has as yet, however, been arrived at.

